

*Drink the dreaded
cup*



*In fellowship with
Christ*

The dreaded cup

When we witness pain and suffering, and the results of disaster or even murder, we will often feel like this shouldn't be happening. When we look for meaning for the bad we see, we need to approach the question in a way that allows us to find reliable and meaningful answers, and this is only possible through a Christian worldview. The Biblical world view is that people suffer as a result of not honouring God and keeping all His commandments in order to live in peace. When mankind insisted on a declaration of independence, God handed us over to suffer the consequences of our choice. (Rom 1:24, 26, 28) *'Although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also approve of those who practice them.'*

Rom 1:32

This is also the reason for our cup of suffering

In this judgment of God on mankind, Christians are not exempt from the consequences of the futility of life and the suffering that comes from the actions of man and his natural order of life. According to God's will Christians are troubled in all things like the rest of humanity. We also suffer disease and natural disaster, along with the consequences of the wilful depravity of the evil intent of sinful people. We suffer illness, accidents, natural disasters, and the results of war. Then there is the real suffering caused by racial prejudice, violent assaults, domestic violence, armed robberies, fraud, embezzlement, poverty, and religious persecution. But the thing that hurts most is the pain we experience at the hands of others who are supposed to be the closest to us, and we even suffer because of the things we imagine others have done.

When we chose to declare our independence from God we lost the opportunity to live in God's peace. Suffering, like all other human experiences, is therefore allowed by the sovereign wisdom of God.

Therefore the only valid reference point for suffering is God, because God is over all things, suffering included. We have to understand the nature of this fallen world, and mankind's relationship with God in order to draw any meaning from the things we see. Since God is at the centre we can only overcome sin and suffering when we are right with God.

While God is perfectly capable of stopping tragedies before they begin, He often chooses not to prevent suffering according to His wise plan of salvation. Since sin has entered the world causing suffering, mankind has to make an effort to resist sin and instead trust and obey God. When we have suffered enough we might come to the point of desperation and turn from our inability, to turn to God who is the only answer for our broken hearts.

While we may not know the why of all our suffering, we do know that God is perfect, just, and holy, and so is His will for all mankind. God in His wisdom uses suffering for our Good. He intends the suffering we experience in this world to do three things. He uses it to lead us to seek after a relationship with Himself; to develop our spiritual strength when we have repented from our independence; and to increase our desire for life in heaven.

James 1:2-3; Titus 2:13; 1 Peter 1:7

In the end we may never learn the precise reason for our suffering; but we must agree with the Bible and trust in our sovereign God. The greatest example to follow of someone who has suffered willingly is Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son of God, in whom the fullness of God dwells. He lived like us without declaring independence, for He lived as one totally dependent on His Father. And He endured the normal experiences of mankind, hunger, thirst, temptation, shame, persecution, nakedness, bereavement, betrayal, mockery, injustice and death.

Although Jesus was innocent of all charges brought against Him and didn't deserve to die for sin, but He suffered for our sin. He substituted Himself for our benefit. Instead of gaining justice when falsely accused, He got the death sentence for us so we can receive the mercy we don't deserve. And instead of us getting our deserved justice and death, we gain mercy because Jesus willingly suffered in our place.

Therefore He is in a position to understand and fulfil the longings of a suffering world sick of sin. Jesus suffered that mankind may receive forgiveness of sins in repenting in order to have an eternal life in the presence of God. Jesus experienced physical pain as well as feelings of rejection and abandonment for the sinful disobedience of mankind. He experienced the same suffering as people today who know the bitterness of isolation, pain, and anguish. He trusted in God while He suffered, so we too need to trust in God even if we don't understand. Nothing in our lives is insignificant to God, everything concerns Him. Now Jesus calls

us to follow Him and suffer as He suffered. In fact, He assured us that we would face trouble in this world (John 16:33) and that He has experienced our struggles personally. Heb 2:14-18; Heb 4:15

Jesus accepted the cup of suffering so we could live

In His suffering for sin, Jesus drank of the cup God prepared for Him before the foundation of the world. *“My Father, if this cup cannot pass away unless I drink from it, Your will be done.”* Matt 26:42

When it comes to us we naturally don't like suffering, but according to the will of God the world of natural man is now experiencing life excluded from the presence of God's peace. And suffering is now the natural result. Consequently suffering is the reward of all mankind. And because we don't like to suffer, there will always be a push to have God in a religious life without the need to suffer.

There will always be those who seek to have all things and enjoy all peace and prosperity without the need to die as they daily put to death the ways of natural man in them because of the consequence of their sinfulness. Many will offer eternal life without mentioning our natural wickedness and God's judgment and the need to die to self in order to live with God. Before the Spirit was given even some of His disciples wanted to be top dog only to be faced with reality.

Jesus replied, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?” They said to Him, “We are able.” He said to them, “My cup you shall drink; but to sit at My right and at My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by My Father.” and whoever desires to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.”

Matt 20:22-23, 27-28

In this darkness of a suffering world, all is not equal

We are all the product of our early environment. Some had good situations, many had nothing. Some were loved, many were forgotten. Some were cherished others were abandoned. Some had good education, some were unable to learn. Some had many opportunities, many had none.

Children live out what they learnt in their early years. Early learning sets the pattern for life. If their beginning was a loving one then they suffered less. For others, sometimes the foundation was not only made of sand, but more like a muddy bog, so their suffering became a way of life that they accepted as normal.

Life in the world ensures everyone has a cup to drink

The fallen world damages everyone for perfection is in God alone. Everyone carries the memories of the pain of the past life in the flesh because everyone has it tattooed on their minds to catch us out like a spider web that acts as a sticky veil the prince of the world uses to deceive and entangle us into thinking the memory is the reality, rather than being a polluted fog that sometimes clouds our vision of the reality of life in Jesus Christ.

When we see the fog that blinds us we have a tendency to react according to the flesh, as if we are forsaken, and as a result we have to take what we think we need by our own efforts. We also have a tendency to interpret the (thoughtless) words and actions of others as been a direct assault on our right to respect and life in the world. This negative reaction results in feelings of abandonment and dispossession that we use to justify our rightful anger to force others to give us what we want, not realising our demands come from the world of brokenness only God can heal. Our anger tells us we expect others to be able to do what we cannot do. We sometimes behave as if others are not allowed to be damaged in the flesh because they have to love us as we are unable to love others. In our suffering we don't want to know that everyone has a cup regardless of their relationship with our heavenly Father. We want people to be perfect so we don't have to suffer.

Sometimes the web of our brokenness causes us to feel the missteps of life as the deepest cutting pain and inexpressible grief. Sometimes it seems that the closer we get to always remaining in Christ the deeper our experience of pain. God uses our increased sensitivity in order to bind us to Himself, but this increase also increases our sensitivity to everything concerning His Kingdom, including the pain caused by sin and the suffering of humanity. Is it possible that the more life is lived in the world according to the flesh of natural man, the less there will be an awareness of interpersonal suffering and insensitivity towards causing pain for others?

Christ in us is the hope of glory as we drink our cup of suffering

The cross of suffering is the way to become like Christ. Christ in us is the hope of glory. As a result, without suffering with Christ in drinking our cup there is no hope in God.

The choice we have is the Spirit or the flesh. The greater must rule over the lesser. The flesh forsakes. The flesh abandons. The flesh gives up. The Spirit doesn't forget. The Spirit doesn't abandon. The Spirit doesn't give up. The past is dead to believers because they have died to the flesh and the past. *'However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.'*

Rom 8:9

In order to avoid constantly falling back on the old impressions of the flesh we need to carefully and persistently seek the glory of Christ and walk daily with God according to our new life in the Spirit in the image of Christ. If walking with God by the Spirit is not our daily experience we will naturally respond to the old impulses according to the flesh.

'But now you also, rid yourselves of all of them: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene speech from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you stripped off the old self with its evil practices, and have put on the new self, which is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created it.'

Col 3:8-10

If we are not actively ridding ourselves of the flesh we will walk in the flesh. In order to walk with God we have to believe we have been reborn in the image of Christ. *'that, in reference to your former way of life, you are to rid yourselves of the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you are to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.'*

Eph 4:22-24

Therefore when it comes to Christians who have truly repented, the true disciples of Jesus will suffer because they remain faithful to their Christ having been born of God's Spirit. *"Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me."*

Matt 5:11

Jesus taught that the disciple is to become like his Master

“A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master. It is enough for the disciple that he may become like his teacher, and the slave like his master. If they have called the head of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they insult the members of his household! For I came to turn a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a person’s enemies will be the members of his household. And the one who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. The one who has found his life will lose it, and the one who has lost his life on My account will find it.”

Matt 10:24-

25, 35-36, 38-39

Even knowing this scripture, some will avoid the cup of Christ as did the five churches of Revelation, Ephesus, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, and Laodicea, by compromising His holiness. By failing to declare the need for self denial and obedience to God, and instead promoting a way of personal enjoyment and a land of plenty.

But Jesus didn’t see the suffering the faithful would endure as a valid obstacle to true faith preventing obedience and looked forward to our eternal reward. *“Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.”*

Rev 2:10

Even so, all is not equal. For those who have had a protected passage in life, having received much in comparison to other, much is required. *‘but the one who did not know it, and committed acts deserving of a beating, will receive only a few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.’*

Luke 12:48

Some will want to be served instead of being the servant of all. For many who call themselves Christian, life is about them, they still live for themselves and prove not to be the genuine article. Every aspect of religion that has man as the centre of the stage has undermined the power and authority of Christ to avoid the duty to lay down our lives to glorify God alone.

Christians drink their cup because they follow Christ regardless

God is sovereign over all things, including the fallen world which is under His judgement. So we must live the life He has chosen for us in the image of His Son. The Son of God commands us to suffer with Him as His faithful followers. He does it by giving us this command. *“If anyone wants to come after Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me.”* (Luke 9:23) A failure to do as He commands will have the following result. *“For whoever wants to save his life will lose it.”* (Luke 9:24a) However *“but whoever loses his life for My sake, this is the one who will save it.”* Luke 9:24b

As Jesus drank the cup the Father had prepared for Him. We drink the cup the Father prepared for us. As the servants of Christ we drink the cup of suffering He has prepared for us, and we do all things according to the values of the kingdom of God. By faith, love, grace, humility, and obedience, and in all servitude and perseverance we are always drawing near to God as we live the life of Christ.

Our Father gives us a cup of trials and tribulation for our spiritual development. That cup isn't meant to be easy, and it isn't meant to break us either. Our cup is the means we can be glorified in Christ as His cup was the means of His glory. Our cup is to be consumed by faith overflowing with love so that we grow up in the image of Christ. The faithful perseverance of God's children builds a holy character which is the backbone of our light shining in the world of darkness, because our devotion in service to God in the midst of tribulation is our acceptable testimony of the treasure of salvation found in Christ alone.

In a real way we should remember that while we hold the cup of suffering with one hand, Christ also holds it in His hand to give us support. When we are inclined to let go we can remember our cup is nothing compared to His cup which He drank on our behalf according to the will of God. Whatever we experience in our walk with God we are not alone and He strengthens us as we trust in Him. Worship is the glue that keeps our hand on the cup.

We cannot worship God with our lips and keep our hearts for ourselves. God prepares our paths so we follow the example of Christ. The Holy Spirit will not share our hearts with the world. If we are not surrendered to the will of God, the Spirit will give us over to the desires of our flesh.

The power of perseverance is the knowledge of His Presence. We follow Christ without complaining about what the Father is doing in us and through us. We must remember that when we grumble about what we endure we grumble against our Father in heaven.

Therefore suffering is a part of following Christ

Jesus says the world is dangerous for a Christian: *"If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, "A servant is not greater than his master." If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. He who hates Me hates My Father also."*

John 15:18-23

The followers of Jesus were often excluded from their own families and communities. Some of the worst persecution came from religious leaders. (Acts 4:1–3) Jesus reminded His disciples, *"If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first."*

John 15:18

Second Tim 3:12 says; *"Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."* As in biblical times, many Christians today have found that making a public declaration of faith in Christ can result in imprisonment, beatings, torture, or even death.

Heb 11:32–38; 2 Cor12:10; Phil 3:8; Acts 5:40

Our obligation is to continue the work of the cross we began when first coming to Christ, even if it kills us. *'So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.'*

Rom 8:12-13

If we choose to take a stand for righteousness and biblical truth, we ensure that we will be misunderstood, mocked, or worse. And all the while we need to keep in mind that no threat of suffering deterred the first apostles from preaching Christ. In fact, Paul said that losing everything was worth it *"that I may know Him and the power of His*

resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death."

Phil 3:10

Suffering in some form or other is always going to be a part of being a true follower of Christ. Jesus said the path that leads to life is a difficult narrow gate many fail to entre. (Matt 7:14) Our hardship is also a way of identifying with His suffering.

2 Tim 2:12

Jesus was made perfect through suffering as our example

God made Jesus Christ, the founder of our salvation, "*perfect through suffering*"? (Heb 2:10) "*He learned obedience through what He suffered?*" (Heb 5:8) Jesus was "*made perfect*" through His suffering. Heb 5:9

In His suffering He put His trust in God, giving us the perfect example as the first born Brother of salvation, so that we can put our trust in Him.

We are also perfected through suffering

Suffering is the tester of faith. Suffering can build faith or expose weakness. Untested faith is a mirage. Adam failed the test of faith.

Our cross is not only our key to heaven; it is the means of our climbing the ladder of our transformation into His image as we suffer the death of our fleshly nature. '*Indeed, all who want to live in a godly way in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.*'

2 Tim 3:12

We often want to hide any idea of sharing His suffering in identifying with Him because we desire smooth waters and a warm bed. But suffer we must if we are to be like Him. '*Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.*

1 Peter 4:1-2

We are undergoing training in righteousness in the darkness of the world so that we become mature in faith as we grow in the light of Christ. We experience God's education in holiness through hardship and affliction because they are inescapable realities in life in the world. As the followers of Christ we take up our cross and suffer with Him to the glory of God. '*He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me."*

Luke 9:23

'And if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.'

Rom 8:17

In drinking our cup of suffering we don't react as unbelievers

"But I say to you, do not show opposition against an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other toward him also."

Matt 5:39

Instead: *"You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOUR and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may prove yourselves to be sons of your Father who is in heaven."*

Matt 5:43-45

We are able to love because God first loved us. (Rom 5:5) And the love of God's Spirit that now resides in us means we can fulfil the law of God's love.

Rom 8:4

This love we have received from God is capable: *'Love is patient, love is kind, it is not jealous; love does not brag, it is not arrogant. It does not act disgracefully, it does not seek its own benefit; it is not provoked, does not keep an account of a wrong suffered, it does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; it keeps every confidence, it believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.'*

1 Cor 13:5-7

As we are confronted with painful experiences we need to learn not to react as we would if we were still in the world without the life and love of God. We need to learn through experience to deny the old life we once lived, and have the attitude of Christ and put on the love of Christ who now lives in us.

Gal 2:20

Instead of reacting we love as we have been loved. Because we have been forgiven, forgiveness replaces rejection. Because we have a new heart, compassion replaces indifference. Since we are secure in Christ, self protection is replaced by protecting others. This discipline in righteousness requires we keep our attention on God while we are pressed to examine what we need to put off as unsuitable for the kingdom of God. *'Let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely.'*

Heb 12:2

Every negative reaction and resistance to the discipline of God must be laid aside. We are to put on love towards others in the way demonstrated by Christ. Obedience is the way of Jesus. *'Although he was a Son, He learned obedience through what He suffered. And being made perfect, He became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.'*

Heb 5:8-9

Reacting to the world is not self denial. Our reactions to the world show us the extent to which we are trapped in our attachment to it. Our reactions to the world also place us in the world. We are to free ourselves from that which Christ has freed us from on the Cross. Having the response of Christ proves we no longer live in the world as if it is our home. When we are led by the Spirit to reveal the love of Christ we show the world the difference between independence from God and dependence on God.

We react to abuse and insult like Christ

"If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also."Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two." Matt 5:40-42

'When we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure.'

1 Cor 4-12

We react to persecution like Christ

"Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

Matt 10:26, 28

We react to the pressures of the world like Christ

'And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.'

Rom 12:2

We react to human needs like Christ

"Do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."

Matt 6:25, 31, 33, 34

'Do not love the world nor the things in the world'

1 John 2:15

We only react from the brokenness of our humanity because we always want something from the world we are not prepared to look for in God. We suffer because it is only in God that our real needs can be met. Regardless of our present condition, God is always enough for His children. Jesus didn't react to the world because He didn't want anything from the world; He only came to save the world. Christ was not flesh; He came in the likeness of sinful flesh. Although He was born of the Spirit and baptized by the Spirit; He was still tempted as we are in every way. He was tempted in every way as we are but He did not align Himself with the world and its passions, and therefore He did not sin by failing to trust in God the Father. He didn't have the attraction to flesh that our humanity has because He lived by faith in the Father, and He lived a life of total obedience, He knew at all times He was the Son of God.

John 13:3

In the same way He has given a new life in the spirit to all who believe in Him and put their trust in Him; so that they too could be free from the control of the world. Jesus is aware of how His people's attachment to the world caused them their pain, and calls us to see the error of our ways; He wants us to see our allegiance is in the wrong place. He constantly teaches His people of the futility of placing their hopes in what they could see. He points to the great value of the Kingdom of God which they should see, or didn't want to see.

The more we live in the Kingdom of God the less we will be attracted and controlled by the needs of the flesh. And the more we will be able to live His life here on earth in spirit, the very life we have been called to. The more we live the life of Christ the more we will see what He saw and feel what He felt as He walked amongst us. The more we walk with God the less we complain about the life He has predestined for us to live on our journey to Glory.

Drinking our cup with Christ means we will not grumble

'So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to desire and to work for His good pleasure. Do all things without complaining or arguments.'

Phil 2:12-14

How quickly do we forget that with Christ we are perfected through suffering, and because the purging of the flesh requires sacrifice, we must willingly suffer in order to be perfected in Him. Rom 12:1-2

Suffering leads to glory. Jesus will share His glory with His faithful children. *“The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one.”* John 17:22

‘The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.’ Rom 8:16-17

A refusal to grumble opens the way for the world to see the glory of God working in us to His glory. Matt 5:16

A refusal to grumble means we will be the light of the world. Matt 5:14

A refusal to grumble will mean the way is open for mercy and forgiveness. Matt 5:7

A refusal to grumble means we have the ability to serve rather than being served. Matt 20:28

A refusal to grumble means we can love others as Christ has loved us. John 13:34-35

A refusal to grumble means we have decided God's will be done because we are done with our will to please ourselves. Matt 3:2

A refusal to grumble simply means we trust in God, all the time, through the good times and the times of our testing. 1 Thess 5:4-9

‘But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.’ Rom 8:37-39

A refusal to grumble will mean we can love our enemies because we can see that even though they are blind to God; they are being used as agents of God for our good. Matt 5:43-48

A refusal to grumble will mean the things that our Father in heaven is concerned with will become our concern. His passion to save people from sin and death will be our desire.

A refusal to grumble accepts God's plan

'Trust in the Lord with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight.'
Prov 3:5-6

'We have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will.'
Eph 1:11

There was never a plan that our life in Christ would be comfortable and safe from the consequences of the sin of man. Therefore it is the Father's pleasure that we follow the example of our Lord Jesus Christ. *'For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps.'* 1 Pet 2:21

We drink our cup because God is enough for us

When God is good enough for us we can be sure He will uphold us in our suffering for His wisdom sake and for His glory. When God is enough we can be at peace even when our world is against us. Therefore if we are wise we can never be comfortable according to earthly things.

When God is enough for us, we will know the power of His peace even if we are being led to be burnt at the stake. *"Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."* (Acts 14:22) *'You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin.'*
Heb 12:4

When God is enough we can know the reality of Christ' words: *Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.* (John 14:27) His peace doesn't depend on being safe and comfortable.

When God is enough we can believe His promise. *"The steadfast of mind You will keep in perfect peace, Because he trusts in You. "Trust in the Lord forever, For in God the Lord, we have an everlasting Rock.*
Isaiah 26:3-4

God promises fellowship when we drink with Him

Life in Christ was never promised to be a party. It was always going to be in fellowship with His suffering. (Phil 3:10) Jesus made this clear when He said: "*In this world you will have trouble.*" (John 15:20) "*I will never leave you.*"
Matt 28:20

Suffering for God's people is not a new thing. The people of faith throughout history have suffered for believing God's promise. '*Others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated (men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground. And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised.*'

Heb 11:36-39

In Christ we have received something others could never have; we have the added strength of the Spirit of promise. Also, while we would suffer with Him, Jesus would also assist us since He is our High Priest who has overcome the world. "*I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.*"

John 16:33

The faithful believer does not question God's goodness in bad times; rather, they know difficult trials prove that we are truly the children of God "*Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love Him.*"

James 1:12

God also uses suffering to help take our eyes off this world and turn them to the greater reality above, Jesus Christ on His throne. And what a throne: '*and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne. And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance. Out from the throne come flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God; and before the throne there was something like a sea of glass, like crystal.*'

Rev 4:2-3, 5-6

Self denial is the way of the cup of Christ

Jesus denied Himself to walk with God.

“My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will.”

Matt 26:39

If we want eternal life with Christ we must first deny ourselves by following His example. *“If anyone wants to come after Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me.”*

Matt 16:24

Repentance begins with self denial, which means we can then live in Him who gives life. *“Remain in Me, and I in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself but must remain in the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in Me.”*

John 15:4

The world is what it is and can't be anything else, so our understanding of living with Christ should give us greater motivation to show the love of God in Christ by word and deed as we live confidently in Him.

'And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.'

Rom 8:28-29

Every moment of doubt, every anxiety, every manner of confusion and every feeling of discontent and of being devalued, is directly related to looking to the world and people for meaning instead of walking faithfully with God.

Drinking our cup is Abiding in Christ

“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.”

John 15:4

The secret to Christ's joy and peace for His people is that they live in Him for others, or, to put it another way, they live His life for others. This way of living produces fruit that remains to eternal life because it is His fruit. It is simple really, from Christ, through us, to others.

The Father is in the Son and the Son is in the Father, and we are in them because the love God has poured out into our heart. Father, Son and branches are inseparable by choice, united in purpose, stubborn in

faithfulness, steadfast in commitment, and determined to succeed in achieving the Father's will.

The indwelling Father and Son in believers is so important Jesus made a number of references to the fact of their divine presence so that we can at least be able to accept it by faith so that the Spirit of God can show us the reality of their presence.

John 14:25

Look how many personal references Jesus makes about how we should consider our unity with God. "*You will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.*" (John 14:20) "*We will come to him and make Our abode with him.*" (John 14:23) "*I will come to you.*" (John 14:28) "*Even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us.*" (John 17:21) "*I in them and You in Me.*" (John 17:23) "*I will never leave you.*"

Matt 28:20

This eternal relationship we share with God means we will guard against speaking a word which is not from the Son, because we abide in the Son and the Father abides in us. As a result of our obedience the Son does His work through us and shows the Father and the Son at work for the benefit of the world.

Divine fruitfulness is the life of God by His Spirit. This Godly fruitfulness which results from uncompromising unity is what the obedient believer can expect as they abide in the Son.

The fruitfulness of God's word working through the believer's life is dependent on keeping Jesus' commandments because we love Him. If there is no fruitfulness, it is because obedience is absent. God is faithful, if we obey because we love Him, we will abide, and we will be fruitful. Lack of fruitfulness means we are separated from fellowship with the Son and the Father.

Our Lord and saviour has promised He and the Father will come and live in us. He promised the Holy Spirit of God who would be in us and He Himself would come to us in person.

John 14:16-18

God has a big picture we need to see

Our Father wants us to see the big picture. With Christ on His throne He is always in control. The innocent will continue to suffer in this world, but this world and all that is in it will pass away; the kingdom of God is eternal. Jesus said, "*My kingdom is not of this world.*" (John 18:36) All

those who follow Christ are encouraged not to see the things of this life, good or bad, as the end of the story. Even the sufferings we endure, as terrible as they can be, *“are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.”*
Rom 8:18

If we live for self then suffering will have the same effect it has on unbelievers, there will be no peace and the hope of being perfected in holiness will have been extinguished. If we forget our Father and His only Son live in us by the Spirit, our training in righteousness will be lacking power and purpose. Faith believes all of what God has said, if we only believe in part, we only know in part, and we deprive ourselves of the fullness of His blessings.

Thank God for His cup

Thank God for His loving testing us by using that which is not perfect in a fallen world. Thank God that He will even use us in our imperfections to help others become more perfect; not that we should be more imperfect to hasten their growth or ours, because all imperfections are harmful and cause pain and suffering. Thank God who mercifully turns the causes for all our grumbling around so they are used to perfect us in the image of Christ.
Rom 8:28-29

Pray that the God will remove the heart of grumbling and give us a heart like Christ' heart so that we can be complete and more useful in the kingdom of God.

'Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.'
Eph 3:20-21

Living Water Resources

Come to the River

‘Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though *something* strange were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that at the revelation of His glory you may also rejoice and be overjoyed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory, and of God, rests upon you. Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; but if *anyone suffers* as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name. For *it is* time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if *it begins* with us first, what *will be* the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? AND IF IT IS WITH DIFFICULTY THAT THE RIGHTEOUS IS SAVED, WHAT WILL BECOME OF THE GODLESS MAN AND THE SINNER? Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God are to entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.’

1 Pet 4:12-19

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